

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the captioned patent application:

Listing of Claims:

1-40. (Cancelled)

41. (Currently Amended) A method of implanting an at least partially implantable hearing system comprising:

fixedly attaching a micromanipulator to the cranial vault of a recipient, said micromanipulator having a manipulator-side coupling attached thereto;

positioning said micromanipulator in a desired position;

fixedly connecting a transducer-side coupling element to an electromechanical transducer in the course of an implantation of said transducer;

releasably coupling said micromanipulator to said transducer, at least one electromechanical transducer, the at least one transducer having a transducer-side coupling element connected thereto, to said micromanipulator, comprising:

snapping said transducer-side coupling element into said micromanipulator-side coupling element to mechanically lock said transducer-side coupling element therein. ; and

~~allowing said transducer-side coupling element to mechanically lock therein.~~

42-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, further comprising:

decoupling said transducer-side coupling element from said micromanipulator-side coupling element, and

removing said transducer from said recipient.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, further comprising:

coupling a replacement transducer, having a transducer-side coupling element, to said micromanipulator.

46. (Previously Presented) An at least partially implantable hearing system comprising:

at least one electromechanical output transducer;

a micromanipulator configured to be fixedly attached to a recipient's cranial vault and, once so attached, to rotationally and axially position, and fixedly retain, said at least one transducer; and

a coupling unit, disposed between said transducer and said micromanipulator, configured to permit decoupling of said transducer from said micromanipulator while maintaining the position of said micromanipulator, comprising:

a transducer-side coupling element, connected to said transducer, having a first configuration and an at least partially deformed second configuration,

a micromanipulator-side coupling element connected to said micromanipulator configured to receive said transducer-side element, and

wherein said transducer-side coupling element adopts said second configuration during insertion into said micromanipulator-side element, and regains said first configuration following insertion, to thereby mechanically lock said transducer-side coupling element into said micromanipulator-side coupling element.

47. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 46, wherein said transducer-side coupling element comprises:

a truncated head having an at least partially circular base;

a cylindrical neck, connected to and aligned with said base along an axis through the center of said base, extending longitudinally away from said base, and having a circumference that is smaller than that of said base, and

a collar extending radially from said neck at an end of said neck remote from said base.

48. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 47, wherein said micromanipulator-side coupling element comprises:

a circular cylindrical receiver having an inner diameter is approximately the same as the outer of said neck, and an outer diameter that is smaller than a diameter of said base.

49. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 46, wherein said transducer-side coupling element is configured to be axially pressed into said micromanipulator-side coupling element.

50. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 46, wherein said transducer-side coupling element is made of a resiliently flexible material.

51. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 46, wherein said transducer-side coupling element is at least partially made of elastic material.

52. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 51, wherein said elastic material is a polymeric material.

53. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 46, wherein said micromanipulator-side coupling element is a rigid annular receiver member.

54. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 46, wherein said transducer-side coupling element is configured to decouple from micromanipulator-side coupling element when said head is compressed at least slightly.